

For Your Information

FROM THE CITY MANAGER & STAFF

May 29, 2020

Dates to Remember

June 15, 2020 – Virtual City Commission Meeting – Virtual meeting instructions on how to watch and/or participate in the virtual meeting will be included with the meeting agenda announcement. Virtual meetings are still being planned by the City at this time due to the impacts of the Coronavirus in Clewiston and Hendry County.. When the City resumes scheduling in-person City meetings, an announcement will be made.

Office of the City Manager:

Citizens, Business Owners & Other Interested Parties:

As of this update, the city, county, state and nation remain in a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 virus despite many steps taken in recent weeks to varying degrees by jurisdictions to allow for reopening of most businesses with limitations on occupancy and required adherence to guidelines recommended by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). State actions to allow certain activities have continued to provide discretion for local jurisdictions to maintain limits on various activities particularly regarding city owned properties and facilities based upon how individual areas are faring with regard to local health metrics related to the virus. In the case of Hendry County including the Clewiston zip code which covers much of the developed county land mass, the numbers of confirmed cases have changed dramatically during the month of May.

For background, Hendry County did not see its first confirmed case of the virus until March 29th. As previously advised, this was several weeks after case numbers were rapidly rising in more urban areas of Florida particularly neighboring counties to the east and west along the coastlines. By April 1st, the county had 5 cases and no deaths. Fast forward to the end of April and the county had 83 confirmed cases with 3 deaths. Although complete May totals will not be known until Monday, June 1st, the total confirmed cases announced to date by the state Department of Health reflecting data through May 28th indicate the county total confirmed cases have grown to 387 with 14 reported deaths. During the last 4 weeks, the county has experienced significant outbreaks of cases reported from the two nursing home facilities located within the county and from private businesses particularly those associated with the agricultural industry and particularly in the field operations aspects of crop harvesting and related activities. The county also experienced a spike related to infected resident employees of a privately managed detention facility located in the South Bay community of Palm Beach County. In similar fashion to Hendry County's experience, other surrounding predominantly rural areas of western Palm Beach County, eastern Lee County, Glades County and Okeechobee County have experienced significantly increased case totals in May as well. For the first time today, the state DOH

website has the Clewiston zip code designated on their map as a “hot spot” along with nearby Immokalee and Belle Glade which have had that dubious distinction for some time.

As a result of the recent alarming trends of increased confirmed cases and the fact that despite significant additional testing occurring, Hendry County’s percentage of positive cases resulting from increased testing efforts continues to be well above state target levels, City of Clewiston management is not in a position to recommend any changes in limitations on the use of facilities and or a return to normal operations at this time. Until the current trends are reversed and data is determined to warrant reconsideration locally, City officials continue to recommend that citizens and businesses practice social distancing, safe hygiene practices, avoid gatherings of ten or more people, use of facial coverings when outside the home and interacting with others and adherence to other CDC guidance. As conditions warrant a change in direction, the City will announce modifications to current restrictions.

The City recognizes that most businesses have exhibited their commitment to following the recommended guidance and limitations imposed by the Governor’s executive orders for the safety of patrons and their employees. For that, the City is thankful. Observations are that a majority of citizens overall also continue to practice safe habits and all other citizens are encouraged to follow the positive examples of their peers for everyone’s benefit and safety. The City congratulates those citizens for taking personal responsibility for being part of the solution and not contributing to the challenges we collectively face.

On an unrelated note, the basic operations of government do continue during the current crisis. Another matter that the City needs your help during this time is with encouraging everyone to participate and do their civic duty by responding to the Census as required by law. It is critical to our community’s future that an accurate accounting of population be completed as it directly affects many of the financial resources and services that the City provides. It is simple and can be done quickly. Please respond to the U.S. Census Bureau as soon as possible.

In closing, I again thank you for your continued support and interest in the City of Clewiston.

Randy Martin

Staff Reports

Community Development Director Travis Reese reports:

- New flood maps went into effect May 15th. The new maps bring many homeowners out of the special flood hazard zone, allowing them to save money on insurance. To see if this applies to you check <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home> or call the Community Development office at 863-983-1500.
- Permits have been issued for 2 additional apartment buildings in the Sweet Lake Villas complex. When completed, there will be 20 new apartments averaging 1487 sq ft each, doubling the size of the development.

Library Director Natasha Hayes reports:

- The library remains closed due to the pandemic but remains open to phone, website, and patron account assistance from noon until 5 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

- Library staff are busy with various duties at this time which range from filling patron requests for materials, conducting inventory of each item in the library, planning and providing online digital programs, as well as virtual storytimes. Mrs. Diana is doing an amazing job with creating the libraries digital arts and crafts programs as well as keeping our Facebook page updated and full of fun things to do and read. This week the digital craft was “Wood Sliced Painting.” All materials for the event is provided by the library in the form of a small kit. Patrons pick up the kits on a designated day and time to ensure contactless transactions. Patrons will then logon to our Facebook page and join the fun through Zoom. Mrs. Maria is doing an excellent job with bringing stories alive through her virtual storytimes. All events are listed on our Facebook page.
- Staff is also working diligently to ensure a sanitary, safe environment for our patrons upon reopening. When items are returned in the drop box, they are placed in a quarantined area for 5 days and then wiped down with disinfectant solution. After that process is complete, the items are checked in, any late fees waived and placed back into circulation.
- Curbside service is provided to patrons who have placed holds for items.
 - Process for placing holds
 - Visit hendrylibraries.org and login to your account by entering your library card number and pin number.
 - Click on Search Catalog (be sure to limit your search by selecting the Clewiston Location)
 - Once you find your item be sure that it indicates “Available” and then press on the icon “Place a Hold”
 - Staff runs the holds report each morning. Staff will then call you to schedule a pick up date and time.
- The library director is working with SWFLN (Southwest Florida Library Network) to bring an exciting virtual summer program to our community since we are unable to host our usual summer face to face programs. SWFLN is currently finalizing the agreement with the company and we will be sure to advertise and jump start the program as soon as we get the green light to do so. If you are interested in checking it out, please visit their webpage at <http://pageturneradventures.com/virtual-storyology-summer/>.
- If you have not done so already, please join our Facebook page (Clewiston Public Library) in order to remain up to date on the library’s events and programs.

Public Works Director Sean Scheffler reports:

- **Amnesty Week Results:** 17 residents delivered 3.2 tons of debris to the transfer station during the countywide household Amnesty Week.
- June is Tree Trimming Amnesty Month. The City will haul trimmings from trees that are trimmed on residential properties and offered for collection at the curb free of charge. Trimmings must be cut in lengths no longer than four feet and four inches across and must be stacked in an orderly manner so that the grab loaders can pick them up quickly and efficiently. Sorry no commercial properties. For questions, call 983-1471 and ask for Jay.
- Levee access is closed till the end of October due to contractor work associated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dike rehabilitation project.
- **Mosquito Control:** Trap counts over last three weeks:

Okeechobee Blvd. 350 – 500; W.C. Owen 175 - 190; Saginaw 200 – 300; Golf Course 450 – 550; and Harlem (no count – trap was stolen)

We have started spraying the Golf Course three mornings each week. Ground missions within the City were performed on May 12 and May 23. Air missions (helicopter) flew on May 16 and May 23. Trap counts have come down a bit but we are in the season so spray missions will be increasing as the rains keep coming.

- **Grant & Project Updates:**

- New sidewalk projects from Wendy’s to San Luiz, San Luiz to Alverde, McDonalds to Berner Road, US27 to Balboa and US27 to Del Rio have projected construction start dates of FY 2022/2023. Staff is seeking ¾ of a mile of sidewalk through a FDOT Safe Route To Schools grant for needed sidewalk sections near school sites.
- The Ventura Avenue Rebuild Project is in design phase and scheduled for 2020 construction. The City’s engineer is preparing design plans to accommodate under the road infrastructure before paving begins.

- **Parks Department Activities:**

- The new “Sand Volleyball Court” in the Sports Complex is completed. When the park facilities are again open to the public, citizens will be able to enjoy the new opportunity to exercise and have fun.
- All disturbed ground around the pavilion has been covered with sod.
- Fixed picnic tables and swings in parks were opened to the public on Friday, May 15th. It was noted that they were all in use on Saturday. Larger gatherings at pavilions are still prohibited.

- **Street Division Activities:**

- Staff worked on dismantling and stowing the usable parts from the signage delivered to the City from recent street projects.
- Pot holes were patched.
- Roads were shouldered on Haiti, Aztec and San Benito.
- We have started a weekly street sweeping schedule. Dry conditions allow sand and organic debris to gather in gutters and swales.
- Irrigation on Ventura was repaired and the grass was fertilized.
- Palms on Ventura were trimmed and fertilized.
- The security doors for the City Hall and Community Development came in and were installed May 18th.
- Sneeze protection for the Library was installed on Friday, May 29.
- Extreme weed intrusion in some of the planted areas on Bond Street required some extreme measures to address them. The areas were emptied and the soil was turned and revealed the roots that needed to be removed. These areas will get a decorative rock/stone ground cover which will be very appealing to the eye, tie into the landscape and reduce maintenance time.
- Staff began painting street markings. Please be aware and careful when crews are working in the street. Avoid the area when possible until the paint dries completely.

Golf Course Director Robbie Rush reports:

- Get all information of what’s going on at Clewiston Golf Course Facebook.

- Get on the E-mail list by going to the City of Clewiston Website. Go to the golf course division and at the bottom of the page you can sign-up on Constant Contact and get all Clewiston Golf Course information.
- Starting June 1, 2020 the Clewiston Golf Course will be closed on Monday's for the summer.
- Summer Memberships are available, contact the golf shop for more information.
- Summer Rates are now in at the club. If you pay for 18 holes you can play as many as you want in that same day.
- Golf Shop Hours are 7:30am-5:30pm. The first tee time is 7:45am.
- Golf Carts have to be in at 6:45pm.
- Walking is permitted all day at the golf course now.
- Clewiston Golf Course has a driving range. The driving range has lights which means you can hit golf balls after (Night Time) hours. Tokens for the range ball machine can be purchased in the golf shop or at the Clewiston Police Department.

Code Enforcement Officer Debbie McNeil reports:

Hurricane Season June 1 until November 30
Remove or enclose in a building all Openly Stored Items on Your Property
before a Storm is Named

City of Clewiston Ordinance

Sec. 18-246. - Sanitation requirements.

(d) *Care of premises.* It shall be unlawful for the owner or occupant of a residential building, structure, or property to utilize the premises of such residential property for the **open storage** of any abandoned motor vehicle or appliance, icebox, refrigerator, stove, glass, building material, building rubbish or similar items. It shall be the duty and responsibility of every such owner and occupant to keep the premises of such residential property clean and to remove from the premises all such abandoned items as listed in this subsection, including, but not limited to, weeds, dead trees, trash, garbage, etc., upon notice pursuant to this division.



Utilities Director Danny Williams reports:

- **Electric Crew Activities**

- Installed new PVC pipes for primary on Caribbean Ave & Lopez St.;
- replaced fuse on E Del Monte Ave;
- repaired streetlights;
- removed vegetation from power lines;
- cut service loose on Alabama Ave. for contractor to change electric panel;
- changed leaking transformer and old cutouts on Central Ave;
- replaced two spans of underground primary on Lopez St. and Aztec Ave.;
- replaced transformer on Florida Ave, installed new transformer bank at fertilizer plant;
- changed out old pole on Hoover Dike Road;
- repaired broken wire in tree on Harlem Academy;
- installed temporary poles in park for new temporary banner;
- changed cross arm on power pole at Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- **Water Sewer Crew Activities**
 - Repaired five water breaks;
 - performed repairs on two pumps on collection system lift station;
 - corrected water pressure issue at USACE.
 - Clewiston Utilities wants to remind everyone that certain items should not be flushed down the toilet, as it can clog and damage sewer systems in the community. We understand that toilet paper supply at home has been low during the coronavirus pandemic. However, if you are using items other than toilet paper in the restroom, please do not flush them. This includes "flushable wipes," despite the flushable claim on the container, the wipes shouldn't be flushed.
- **Customer Service Department**
 - The public Utilities building drive-through service will remain open to customers during normal office hours.
 - Please remember to register with CodeRed (Reverse 911). This system allows us to contact you in case of an emergency or with other informational announcements. You may register by clicking on the CodeRed link at the bottom of the City's website page www.clewiston-fl.gov. You may update your information at any time through the same link.
 - If you are considering replacing your air conditioner or insulation, remember the City offers a rebate program for those items. Most local contractors participate in the program and can give you information. You can also visit our website at www.clewiston-fl.gov or call our office.
 - Don't forget to sign up for your meter based surge protection! Visit our office today.
 - ONLINE BILL PAY IS AVAILABLE on our web site at www.clewiston-fl.gov or www.municipalonlinepayments.com/clewistonfl.